necessary steps are being taken by the Central Board of Secondary Education to simplify the High School and Intermediate Examinations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) to (d) As per information furnished by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the overall pass percentage in the High School (class X) examination conducted by the Board in 2000-2001 has been 66.6%. There has been an increase of 1.2% in the overall pass percentage as compared to the last year. Information regarding pass percentage of candidates belonging to different categories of schools is given below:—

Kendriya Vidayalayas	—	81.0
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	—	87.0
Govt. Schools	—	38.9
Govt. aided Schools	—	51.3
Independent Schools	—	85.4
Private/Patrachar candidates	—	26.7

1,04,158 candidates were placed in the compartment out of the total 4,86,718 candidates who appeared in the class X Examination. The low pass percentage of students belonging to Govt. schools is largely the responsibility of the concerned State Govt./UT. The CBSE has taken various measures such as development, publication and use of sample question papers & detailed marking schemes, and orientation/training of teachers & examiners so as to make the examination system a valid and reliable measure of pupil's educational achievement.

Absenteeism among teachers

†2801. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any concrete and necessary

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

steps to check the tendency among the teachers to remain absent from schools;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not; the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the issues on which Government have laid special emphasis and issued directives to concerned State Governments and Government school, for bringing qualitative improvements in education?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) to (c) Education is on the concurrent list and school education is primarily the concern of the State/UT Governments. As such the matters relating to education are monitored by respective State/UT Governments. However, the reports of teacher absenteeism have come from a few States. The steps like, restructuring educational machinery, enhancement of disciplinary and financial powers of Heads of schools, involvement of community by constituting governing body for each school, fixing of targets for examinations result, etc. have been taken to address the problems.

For qualitative improvement in education, the measure to conduct pre-board examination, preparing Question Banks conducting bridge courses and arranging special classes for the vulnerable children have also taken.

Defence studies at higher secondary level

2802. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has been proposed to prescribe defence studies as a subject at higher secondary level;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be done; and

(c) if not, whether Government would consider doing it in view of the changing defence and security environment in and around our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA